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The vast majority of the records correlated for this paper were gleaned from the *Entomologist*, *Entomologist's Record and Journal of Variation*, *Entomologist's Gazette*, and the *Entomologist's Monthly Magazine*; also consulted were the *Victoria County Histories* of Norfolk, Suffolk, Cambridgeshire, Huntingdonshire, Hertfordshire, Essex, Surrey, Kent, Bedfordshire, Somerset, Herefordshire, Gloucestershire, Hampshire, Oxfordshire, Rutland, and Sussex.

## Notes and Observations

A PRODUCTIVE OAK IN A S.E. LONDON WOOD. — In the eastern portion of Oxleas Woods SSSI at Shooters Hill (over whose fate, alas, the proverbial sword of Damocles now hangs) there stands a fine oak, massive, spreading, and still vigorous. On 30th October 1984 this tree was found to have, on one side of its trunk, a number of smallish sap-runs, tending to coalesce into a diffuse sappy area much frequented by wasps and mostly small Diptera. The latter were few in species — I need mention only *Dryomyza anilis* Fall., whose numbers reached a peak on 11th November. It was the Coleoptera that proved unexpectedly interesting, in quality if not in quantity. To obtain them, however, was far from easy owing to the effort needed to prise off small pieces of the thick, extremely tough and tenacious bark, under and between which the beetles were to be found half hidden by sappy accumulations. A few also were sifted out of debris at the foot of the tree where a little sap had penetrated. They were (omitting species of no particular note):—

\**Epuraea guttata* Olf. and *E. pusilla* Ill., both singly; \**Cryptarcha strigata* F., 3, and 3 more on 17.v.85; *Carpophilus sexpustulatus* F., \**Thamiaraea cinnamomea* Grav. and \**T. hospita* Mark., all singly; *Atheta taxiceroides* Munst., plentiful on 11.xi but hard to secure, running in warm sunshine in and out of crevices and fissures of bark.

I had never before encountered any of these in the S. E. London area (not even the widespread *E. pusilla*); but what is especially noteworthy is the occurrence of the four starred species traditionally associated almost exclusively with *Cossus*-infected sap, though I could find no evidence of the latter's presence. Compare my remarks in 1985, *Ent. Rec.* 97: 32-3, regarding an undoubted *Cossus* oak at Blackheath (which yielded none of the above!). I have now to retract the suggestion there put forward that because of the extreme rarity of *Cossus* in this area to-day, its specifically associated beetles probably no longer exist there. On the contrary, it now seems that in the absence of *Cossus* they can make do quite well with uninfected sap (and may increasingly be obliged to do so).

*A. taxiceroides* was a notable find, since not only is the species new for the London district but the above habitat also is unrecorded for it; previous captures (not yet numerous) connect it with nests and especially squirrels' dreys. Experience points to it as an autumn species, and indeed it was found the following spring to be replaced on the oak by the closely-allied *A. nigricornis* Thoms.

Had this profitable tree only been discovered earlier in the season (assuming the sap was then flowing) other notable insects might well have been obtained — including, possibly, the remaining three members of our little band of recognized 'Cossus' beetles. That is, apart from *Tachinus bipustulatus* F. which, formerly not rare, seems unaccountably to have died out (or very nearly so). The absence of *Soronia grisea* L. at the Oxleas oak, contrasting with its abundance at the Blackheath one, was surprising.

It remains only to say that, as foreseen, this noble tree quickly healed its wounds by fresh growth, all sap flows having dried up by the following June; hardly a trace now remains of its previous scarring. I am grateful to my friend Alex Williams who on his first visit to the wood happened to light upon the tree and, having collected from it three of the above species, promptly informed me of the fact. — A. A. ALLEN.

A NOTE ON THE APPARENT LOWERING OF MORAL STANDARDS IN THE LEPIDOPTERA — It is a sad sign of our times that the National newspapers are all too often packed with the lurid details of declining moral standards and of horrific sexual offences committed by our fellow *Homo sapiens*; perhaps it is also a sign of the times that the entomological literature appears of late to be